

Submitter: Lisa Bosotina

On Behalf Of: Regional Inclusive Services Parent

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5014

Lisa Bosotina, Forest Grove, OR

Testimony- House Bill 5014, Regional Inclusive Services RIS

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the subcommittee,

My name is Lisa Bosotina, I am the mother of a 10-year-old daughter who is deaf and hard of hearing named Jemma. Jemma will become deaf.

I would like to thank Representative McLain and the staff of Senator Sollman for meeting with myself and Jemma last week. I needed to show her the impact and importance of our gratitude and simple attendance. I know that she and I are the best result in making a very easy and obvious change for Oregon's children, and I am beyond grateful she had the opportunity hear that change being made.

I would like to ask you to please provide the Regional Inclusive Services RIS team an additional 25 million dollars in support for emergency assistance to families and teachers statewide. Families like my own, who have struggled within their own designated school districts to receive basic special education services and a qualified administration.

Northwest Regional Education School District of Washington County has provided Jemma an abundance of services since her birth. This agency has constantly met her needs beyond expectation and has given myself a wealth of knowledge in parent advocacy and training.

I fear for my state in the uprise of Covid related deaf and hard of hearing and special needs birthrates, knowing that the general fund for Regional Inclusive Services has not increased in 15 years.

This additional support would include funding for certifications within training to educators as result to increase the amount of hired qualified professionals.

There are currently a minimal 33 qualified Regional audiologists statewide to service their (all time highest) 12% deaf and hard of hearing population. This results in a single county audiologist to have a 45-50 child caseload at a time. This is alarming and not a surprise due to the lack and lag in services within Oregon's public schools, especially in Jemma's case in rural Washington County.

“Our hands are tied.” “We can not meet your daughter’s special needs.” “We are an overwhelmed district.” These are phrases I have never heard from NWRESD. Jemma’s built-upon service plan from NWRESD has been ongoing for 10 years and she thrives as a result.

The RIS plan would be in the best interest of our state to proceed upon, to preventatively give the special education of Oregon the opportunity and chance to thrive as much as my daughter has.

Thank you,
Lisa Bosotina, Forest Grove, OR